

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Education Committee Meeting Minutes
April 15, 2019

Members Present

Bob Kresmer, Chair
Ed House
Doris Woltman
Lisa Yencarelli
Julie Urban

Members Absent

Jared Kittelson
Lisa Jackson

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Dean Howard
Grayson

Call to Order and Introductions

Bob Kresmer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm in the DERS Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

Approval of February 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Lisa Yencarelli motioned to approve the minutes from the February 12, 2019 meeting. Ed House seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

ASDB Update

Dean Howard stated he had served on the Board of Directors for the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind and had recently become the President of the Board. Dean Howard stated he was a parent of a deaf daughter, who was a student at Desert Voices, and was now attending the Jones-Gordon School for students on the spectrum. Mr. Howard stated the ASDB Board of Directors and the Superintendent was interested in early intervention services, the residential program in Tucson and in reviewing the services

offered through the co-operatives. Dean Howard stated there had been some discussion regarding potentially shutting down the residential program in Tucson and noted the Board was interested in whether there was a better location for a residential program. Dean Howard stated the Board was also interested in identifying how to reach students in northern Arizona and other outlying areas. Dean Howard stated there had been discussion regarding the funding that went towards the co-operatives and how those funds could be best utilized. He noted that he was also interested in reaching out to the community partners and to hear directly from them regarding the processes that were working and the processes that were not working. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the ASDB Board of Directors had any committees with members from the community partners. Dean Howard stated that currently there were no committees. He noted that he suggested to Annette Reichman, ASDB Superintendent, that there should be a student advisory board that reported to the Board of Directors. He noted that he was also interested in hearing from the trades because many students could exit high school and could obtain employment with a trade.

Bob Kresmer inquired whether there was a formal process so that teachers could have a voice in educational policy. Bob Kresmer stated that individuals that had daily contact with the students and parents were the teachers and could provide valuable feedback on educational policies. Dean Howard stated that Annette Reichman had mentioned a group that met quarterly and she would provide a presentation to the Board regarding that group's activities. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the Finance Committee examined the ratios of administrative expenses for putting teachers in daily contact with students. Dean Howard stated the Board was interested in learning exactly how the funds were allocated. Julie Urban inquired how many students were in the residential program for blind and visually impaired students. Dean Howard stated that he did not have the exact numbers, although he could get that information. Julie Urban inquired whether the number of residential students had decreased. Dean Howard stated the number of students enrolled in the residential program had decreased and the greatest need was in northern Arizona. Julie Urban inquired whether ASDB provided services to students with multiple disabilities. Dean Howard stated that ASDB did provide services for students with multiple disabilities. Mr. Howard noted that ASDB was interested in using the current model or developing a different model to reach students in the outlying areas. Dean Howard stated that he toured the residential program buildings and noted the buildings required maintenance to be safe for students. Doris Woltman stated she reviewed the enrollment report and there were 18 students in the residential program for the blind and visually impaired. Dean Howard stated that there were other services available for

students and parents were able to choose which school would be the best option for their children.

Julie Urban inquired whether the ASDB Board met in Phoenix as well as Tucson. Dean Howard stated the Board met in Phoenix and in Tucson. Julie Urban inquired how the community could obtain information regarding the Board meetings. Lisa Yencarelli stated the date and locations of the Board meetings were on the ASDB website. Dean Howard stated that he welcomed committee members to contact him with any additional questions or comments. Bob Kresmer stated the GCBVI included several stakeholders such as Annette Reichman and encouraged the ASDB Board of Directors to consider inviting stakeholders to participate on ASDB committees. Dean Howard stated he was interested in getting a different perspective and to focus on the parents that did not send their children to ASDB. Julie Urban stated that some Special Education Directors should be encouraged to promote agencies such as ASDB.

Bob Kresmer inquired whether the committee members had any feedback or comments from the discussion with Dean Howard. Ed House stated that Dean Howard discussed great ideas and he would support the items. Julie Urban stated that Dean Howard was open and answered all the committee's questions. Bob Kresmer stated he would follow up with a thank you letter and reinforce the suggestion that ASDB consider inviting stakeholders to participate on committees or workgroups. Ed House stated that Dean Howard discussed networking among stakeholders and inquired a representative from AER could participate on the ASDB Board of Directors. Lisa Yencarelli stated the Board members were appointed by the Governor and her understanding that all the positions were filled. Bob Kresmer stated he could review the state mandates of the ASDB Board of Directors membership. Lisa Yencarelli stated that ASDB would hold Town Halls with Annette Reichman in Phoenix on April 25, 2019 at 6:00 pm and in Tucson on May 6, 2019 at 6:00 pm.

High Stakes Test Score Collection Discussion

Bob Kresmer inquired whether the schools were currently administering the high stakes tests. Doris Woltman stated that some schools were administering the tests until the end of the month, although some schools had already administered the tests. Bob Kresmer inquired whether any committee members were aware of any blind or visually impaired students had reported difficulties accessing the tests. Lisa Yencarelli stated that she had not heard of any difficulties, although Lisa Jackson would have been notified any of any issues.

Early Childhood Activities Discussion

This item was tabled.

Youth Transition Program Discussion

Bob Kresmer stated he learned that there were approximately 14 applications from youth interested in participating in the Youth Transition Program. Mr. Kresmer noted that typically, there were approximately 40-50 applications from students interested in the program. Bob Kresmer noted the Services for the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID) Program Manager position was vacant, and those responsibilities had been divided between the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) management staff. Bob Kresmer stated the agencies that provided the Youth Transition services, SAAVI Services for the Blind, the Foundation for Blind Children (FBC), Colorado Center for the Blind, and Blind Inc., could provide outreach to students. He noted the agencies would extend the April 15, 2019 deadline and continue outreach to students. Ed House stated that some teachers in the past were instrumental in telling parents and students about the Youth Transition Program and could be contacted. Mr. House stated the consumer groups had also played a role in encouraging students to participate in the Youth Transition Programs as well. Ed House stated that students that had participated in the program in previous summers could be contacted and invited to participate again. Doris Woltman stated that each year, ASDB compiled a list of the students eligible to participate in the Youth Transition Program and noted that some students received notice that they were not eligible for the program. She stated there was a disconnect in the communication somewhere in the process and students were unable to participate in the program. Doris Woltman stated she had reached out to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors in the past, but several counselors were new and were not familiar with the program. Bob Kresmer stated that he would follow up with VR regarding the communication challenges.

Julie Urban stated that very few teachers were becoming itinerant teachers and that many of the Teachers for the Visually Impaired (TVI)s were retiring. She noted that the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) did have a list serve of teachers that could receive information about the Youth Transition Program. Bob Kresmer requested that Julie Urban forward that list to him and he would follow up with distributing the information. Lisa Yencarelli stated that she experienced challenges in distributing the information to the parents due to privacy laws. Julie Urban stated she knew that some teachers sent questions to VR counselors but did not receive responses.

Lisa Yencarelli inquired regarding the process for students to sign up for the Youth Transition Program. Bob Kresmer stated that students would learn about the program from the agencies that provided the services. He noted that the agencies would visit different cities in person or through videoconference and would provide presentations and answer questions from students, teachers, and parents. Bob Kresmer stated the agencies would tell the students, teachers, and parents who to contact if they were interested and would encourage parents to sign the applications to initiate the process.

Date and Agenda for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Education Committee is TDB. Agenda items are as follows:

- High Stakes Test Score Discussion
- Early Childhood Program Discussion
- Youth Transition Program Discussion

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

A call to the public was made with no responses forthcoming.

Adjournment of Meeting

Julie Urban motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ed House seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 pm.